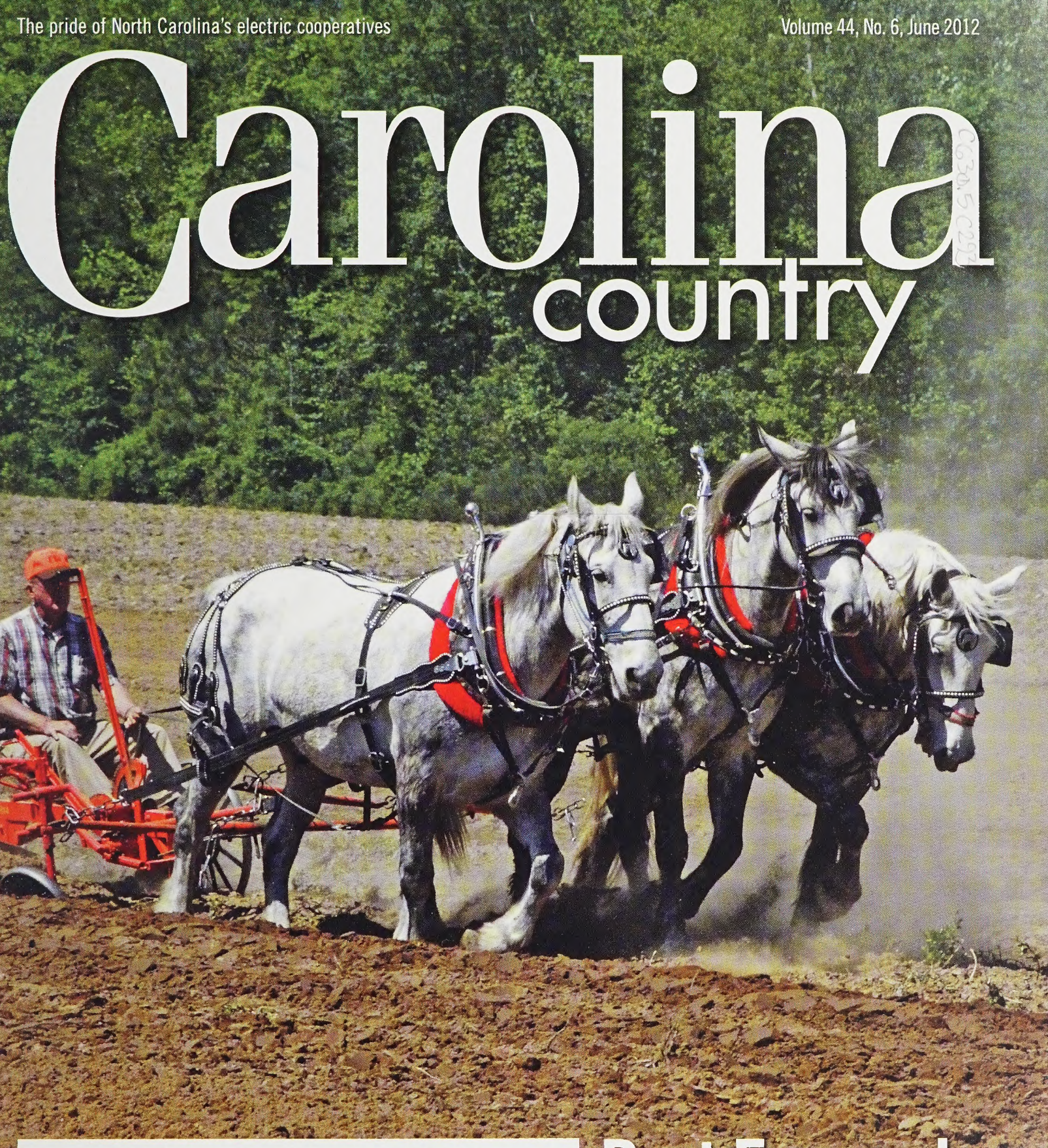
The pride of North Carolina's electric cooperatives

Volume 44, No. 6, June 2012

Carolina country



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Past Forward

INSIDE:

Horse plowing

Mules in the military

Mill town heritage

A consumer's guide to heat pump systems—page 12

Amazing New Hybrid Runs Without Gas

The new face of time? Stauer's Compendium Hybrid fuses form and functionality for UNDER $30! Read on...

Innovation is the path to the future. Stauer takes that seriously. That's why we developed the ***Compendium Hybrid***, a stunningly-designed hybrid chronograph with over one dozen analog and digital functions that is more versatile than any watch that we have ever engineered.

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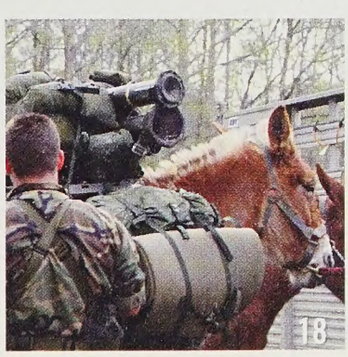
ON THE COVER

Rex McArthur drives a three-abreast of Percheron horses to a sulky plow this spring at the annual Indian Ridge Corn Planting in Cumberland County. Learn about horse plowing in North Carolina on pages 16–17. (Photo by Tina L. LaValle)



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Your cooperative sends you Carolina Country as a convenient, economical way to share with its members information about services, director elections, meetings and management decisions. The magazine also carries legal notices that otherwise would be published in other media at greater cost.

Your co-op's board of directors authorizes a subscription to Carolina Country on behalf of the membership at a cost of less than $4 per year.

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The Lavender Project Cooperative

by Kathryn Kruse

Get close to a tourist in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, and you might catch the light fragrance of lavender. Ask them about it and they will describe the finely packaged bars of soap in their hotel room and the delicate aroma that lingers with them throughout the day. Drive a short distance up the road and the high desert landscape breaks into fields of lavender where that scent originates. You have arrived at Rancho La Colorada and The Lavender Project Cooperative.

Though only 45 miles away, the pueblo feels very far from the high-end hotels and restaurants of San Miguel. Transformed by economic hardship, the community functions like a wartime village: the young men have left to find work, while the women and elderly toil to pull their livelihood out of the dry earth.

In 2007 some community members transitioned away from pure subsistence farming. Hoping to battle poverty with a cash crop, La Coloradans have dutifully tended acres of lavender by hand: tilling the sandy soil, planting each small bush, maintaining the drip irrigation system. In the past few months their hard work has begun to pay off as the fields grow heavy with blossoms.

Inside Rancho La Colorada's homes and community center, you will find groups of women extracting lavender oil, making soap and intricately embroidering hand-made sachets of lavender. Producing actual high-quality, all-natural goods for sale, these women make up a critical arm of the cooperative's structure. As profits climb, the cooperative initiates lasting educational, nutritional and medical programs at their local community center. But The Lavender Project participates in an economic web that extends beyond its members and the hotels that purchase their products. A U.S. non-profit, St. Anthony's Alliance, and local government have provided the cooperative crucial funding, seed grants and training.

Members of The Lavender Project will tell you that they take pleasure in learning to navigate these multiple systems. They are happy to sell the lavender products for visitors and foreigners to use and enjoy. However, they will look over the fields of lavender and say that they labor towards a specific dream of their own. They will say they are not using the soft scent of lavender, but the promise of a stable income to bring back their men, empower women and make their families and community whole once more.

Kathryn Kruse wrote this and other stories for www.stories.coop, a project of the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises. See more stories about cooperatives and upload your own at www.stories.coop.

The Lavender Project (El Proyecto de Lavanda) is a rural Mexican farming cooperative whose main purpose is to create jobs, sustain families and better the community via the development of sustainable, alternative agricultural processes, innovative products and responsible business practices. The co-op has 45 members and 26 employees. For more information, visit www.thelavenderproject.com

The garden hose

So, my hubby was going to mow the grass a few weeks ago, and I reminded him to roll up the hose because it would be hard to see in the grass and he would run over it. I have told him to roll it up when he is finished with it and he never listens. My hubby has a severe case of wife deafness. And just like I figured, over it he went and chopped the hose in pieces. Being the good wife I am, I picked at him about it for a week then went and bought a new hose.

Fast forward to a day when I was off from work and was going to mow some so he wouldn't have so much to mow when he got home. (Our yard keeps increasing in size, I swear it does!) Anyways, I pile my fat self on the mower and am happily running around the yard in the Earnhardt gear the hubby has told me never to mow in, and then I heard it: CHOMP, CHOMP.

I look back, wondering if that was the neighbor I just ran over, and see little pieces of the new garden hose. I had watered flowers the night before and hadn't rolled up the hose.

Well, I know there is NO WAY I could tell him what I had done, because I had picked at him about it for so long when he did it. So I jump in the car and run over to the hardware store and get a new hose. I was sooooo proud of myself that I had gotten away with it—until I got home.

We had used the other hose for a few weeks (before I made it into straws) and it was all dirty and stuff, and the new hose damn near glowed it was so clean. So I drug it up and down the driveway in the dirt about 10 times and then pulled it through the grass some so it would look like it had been used a lot. I knew I had it knocked then. He would never know I had done the same stupid thing he had. I was sooooo pleased at myself.

The next day, he goes to water the flowers and off across the yard he goes, dragging the hose with him. I am standing in the window watching him and thinking all along just how smart I really am. Until, he ran out of hose way before he ran out of flowerbed. He couldn't get to the other end of the flower bed with the hose like he had two days ago. I watched him out the window, pulling on the hose so hard that I thought he was gonna drag the house up the hill by the hose. He came back to see if it was snagged on something. I couldn't figure out what was wrong. Then it hit me. We had had a 30-foot hose in the beginning, and I, in my rush to get the replacement hose, had bought a 15-footer.

So, I go out the door, dreading what I had to do. He is standing there with the hose in his hand, looking back at where it's connected to the house and you can tell by the look on his face, he has no clue what is going on. I tried to tell him that I had heard on the radio that if you left a garden hose lying in the sun, it would shrink. He didn't fall for that one. So I told him the little drizzle of rain we had the night before caused it to draw up. Nope, didn't work.

All at once he looked at me and I swear I saw a light bulb go off in his head. "You did it, too, didn't you! Come on, fess up. You ran it over, too, didn't you?"

What could I say? I just dropped my head, turned and crawled back into the house.

Joy Boone, Hickory

Blue Ridge Electric member Victoria Yates, of Watauga County, wrote to say thank you to Tim Jones, crew leader, and Chap Ruppard, line technician B, both of Blue Ridge Electric's Watauga district, for hanging a quilt square on the family's barn with "expertise and care." She said that her father, the late Dexter Yates, would have been proud.

Fan mail

The first article I read In Carolina Country is "Jacob's Log" by Jacob Brooks. I enjoy his fresh, youthful perspective and personal insights. I am thankful that his contribution to Carolina Country magazine has extended beyond his service in electric cooperatives' Youth Leadership Council and during his studies at ASU.

Teresa Carey, Indian Trail, Union Power Cooperative

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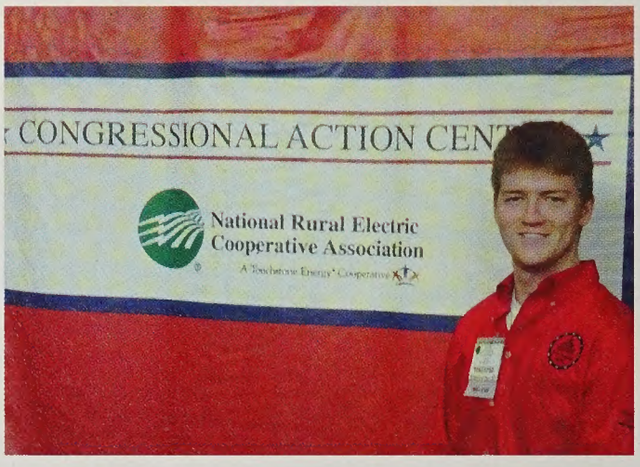
JACOB'S LOG:

Our best-laid plans

By Jacob Brooks

My brother Josh and I had been looking forward to this evening all day. We had made plans to go camping with two of our buddies, Nathan and Gage. Now, when I say, "made plans," I mean we sat around bored, for an hour, trying to decide what to do, and at 8 p.m. we decided to go camping. As with most of our planning, getting into details was unnecessary.

We decided to set camp down at the river, which is about three miles from the house. The original course of action was to load down our four-wheelers with supplies and go set up. However, we didn't factor in the importance of having daylight to set up a tent. I wish now that I would have kept quiet, but I made a suggestion: "Hey guys, someone should go ahead and set up the tent." Because sometimes I forget to think before speaking, the others delegated the job to me. Lucky me.



I grab the tent bag, hop on my four-wheeler and head to the river. By the time I arrive at the location of what would be home for the next 11 hours, it is completely dark. Trying to pitch a tent in the dark is an enriching experience. I have never been so frustrated in my life. After 30 minutes of making zero progress, one of the fellas finally shows up. Nathan dismounts the four-wheeler and makes his way toward me: "Tent up yet?" As you can imagine, I answer in the nicest way.

I assign Nathan to be the official flashlight holder. Unfortunately, Nathan has a small fear of moths. What honestly should have taken five minutes seems to take an hour. Every 30 seconds a moth flies near the flashlight, and Nathan drops the light and screams. He then picks up the flashlight, shines it on the tent for maybe 30 seconds, and drops it again when the next moth arrives. We could have won an award for the most inefficient outdoorsmen of all time.

With the tent finally up, Nathan and I just have to wait on Josh and Gage. Of course we wait in the dark; heaven forbid we cut the light on and a moth shows up. Josh and Gage eventually show up, but they bring with them what seems like every single blanket and pillow this side of the Mississippi. At first, I don't mind because I'm all about being comfortable, but it becomes an inconvenience when there is hardly any room in the tent. The four of us are pretty good-sized boys. Being forced to cuddle up close to one another is not exactly our forte either. Anyway, we finally lay down for the night, and I think the madness is over. The only thing on my mind is waking up in the morning, so I can go home.

Around 7 a.m., I am startled awake by two loud screams. I look around the tent and notice Nathan and Josh are missing. I get out of the tent to see what's happening. Nathan and Josh are running towards me, screaming their heads off and swatting the air around them. They had stepped on a nest of yellow jackets, and, needless to say, made the inhabitants unhappy. I watch as they run by me and hop on their four-wheelers to make their escape home. Gage, being allergic to bees, also makes a quick getaway.

I am left to watch the chaos, reflect on this 11-hour disaster, and clean up our campsite.

Jacob Brooks served as the electric cooperatives' Youth Leadership Council national spokesman in 2010 and remains active in the annual Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. He attends Appalachian State University.

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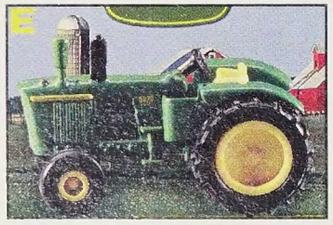

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Cooperatives "put people first"

Charity Gambill-Gwyn, Blue Ridge Electric board member, told the statewide annual meeting about her cooperative's work with member advisory committees, local nonprofit organizations, and a "sister" co-op in Bolivia.

North Carolina's electric cooperative board members and management staff in April celebrated the cooperative business model as they conducted affairs at the annual meeting of their statewide organizations held in Raleigh.

"As a sustainable business model, the cooperative model is the strongest we have," said Donald H. "Donnie" Spivey, CEO of Pee Dee EMC and president of North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC), the cooperatives' power supply arm. As the electric utility industry faces major upgrades in its infrastructure, Spivey reminded those attending that "our core mission is to focus on our members."

Expressing similar sentiments, Joseph P. Brannan, NCEMC's CEO since May 1, said, "When you put people first, you usually find the right answer." He enumerated the challenges facing electric cooperatives: an aging infrastructure, new government regulations and technology that is changing with consumer demands.

A panel of advocates described their experiences in seeing cooperatives succeed by serving their members at all turns. They included Randolph Electric's CEO Dale Lambert, Four County Electric's CEO Mitchell Keel, and Blue Ridge Electric director Charity Gambill-Gwyn. "Rural people are a cut above," Mitchell Keel said. "We have common sense, can-do attitudes. Cooperatives conduct business in a businesslike way, with less wrangling...Our boards are always focused on 'what would the members think about this.'"

Keynote speaker Martin Lowery, executive vice president at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, reiterated the values that define cooperatives as updated by the International Cooperative Alliance in 1995: self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. "We do what we do because we are driven by these values," he said. "We are organizations that younger people now can admire and take pride in working for."

The cooperatives presented college scholarships to Michaela Glen Smith of Princeton (Katie Bunch Memorial Scholarship), Austin Glock Andrews of Rockingham (Gwyn B. Price Memorial Scholarship), and Douglas Stephens IV of Cumberland County (Youth Leadership Council Scholarship).

Certificates of Excellence for safety—granted every three years for co-ops achieving safety standards during the three-year period—were given to the following cooperatives: Four County EMC (14th achievement), Pitt & Greene EMC (13th achievement), and Union Power Cooperative (11th achievement). Co-ops awarded the same certificates earlier were Albemarle EMC (13th achievement), Brunswick EMC (11th achievement), Edgecombe-Martin County EMC (11th achievement), and Tri-County EMC (7th achievement).

The following were elected officers for 2012–2013.

- **NCEMC:** President Donald H. Spivey, *Pee Dee EMC*; Vice President Mitchell L. Keel, *Four County EMC*; Secretary-Treasurer Mark A. Suggs, *Pitt & Greene EMC.*
- **N.C. Association of Electric Cooperatives:** President Tony E. Herrin, *Union Power*; Vice President Allen W. Speller, *Roanoke Electric*; Secretary-Treasurer Jeffrey B. Joines, *Blue Ridge Electric.*
- **Tarheel Electric Membership Assn:** President David Eggers, *Blue Ridge Electric*; Vice President J. Michael Davis, *Tri-County EMC*; Secretary-Treasurer Tony E. Herrin, *Union Power.*

A fun day in Durham

The International Year of the Cooperative will be celebrated in Durham on June 2 at the Co-op-A-Fair. This free day-long event hosted by cooperatives from around North Carolina will offer fun and games for the whole family. Co-op-A-Fair features guest speakers, entertainment, food, cooking and cheese-making demonstrations and more, including the **Giant Shopping Cart** (straight from the State Fair), a bounce

house, a maze and live performances by local bands like Big Bang Boom. Touchstone Energy and Piedmont EMC will have booths there, too.

It runs from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 318 Blackwell St., Durham (the park next to the American Tobacco Campus). Free parking is available.

For more information, visit www.communitytour.coop. The event is part of the 2012 Community Tour along the East coast greenway.

2012 International Year of Cooperatives

Appreciation for Rick Thomas

At its annual meeting in April, the board of the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC) issued a resolution thanking Richard K. "Rick" Thomas for his 17 years of service. Thomas retired in April as CEO of the power supply cooperative owned by most of the state's electric cooperatives. The resolution included the following summary of his career:

- He devoted more than two decades of his professional career to electric cooperatives and the electric utility industry.
- He guided the construction of approximately 700 megawatts of combustion turbine generation that serves as a valuable peaking resource.
- He negotiated ownership interest in additional nuclear plant capacity to substantially benefit the cooperatives' economic stature.
- His execution of an indenture in 2011 provided access to financial markets that supplement traditional Rural Utilities Service financing and enhance NCEMC's financial flexibility.
- In 2010, NCEMC attained strong investment quality ratings reflecting NCEMC's improved financial standing achieved under his direction.
- His leadership in refinancing $1.2 billion of NCEMC debt in 2007 led to annual cost savings of approximately $14 million.

NCEMC president Donnie Spivey of Pee Dee EMC (left) presents a resolution of appreciation to Rick Thomas on his retirement as NCEMC's CEO.

Fans add comfort to Hope Plantation

Historic Hope Plantation, a 50-acre site featuring the restored 1803 mansion of Gov. David Stone, offers insights into the late 18th- and 19th-century rural life in eastern North Carolina. In 1992, the 13,000-square-foot Roanoke-Chowan Heritage Center was added to the site. Serving as a visitor's center, museum and gathering space, the Heritage Center presented a challenge when it came to keeping visitors comfortable.

Heritage Center staff members were having a difficult time efficiently heating the space in the winter, as the small amount of warm air available would rise to the top of the two-story central atrium, leaving visitors in the cold below. Two 8-foot diameter Isis fans by the Big Ass Fan Company provided the solution. Heat rises to the highest reaches of a building, far from the occupant level, which tends to be cooler. A large-diameter, low-speed fan efficiently pushes hot air down to the floor, enhancing visitor comfort.

"I keep the fans on all the time to redistribute the heat in the area," said Bill Smith, Hope Plantation treasurer and bookkeeper. "Guests in the atrium were previously either too cold or too hot, or both. The fans have smoothed things out. People appreciate that, and we have had more attendees as a result."

Historic Hope Plantation, served by Roanoke Electric Cooperative, is located west of Windsor in Bertie County. Visit www.hopeplantation.org.

Above: *At Historic Hope Plantation, large diameter, low-speed fans circulate the equivalent of nine standard ceiling fans, providing air movement that can be felt from floor to ceiling and wall to wall, at a monthly operating cost of pennies per day.*

Try This!

Blocking heat helps cool your living space under the roof

By Jim Dulley

Adequate attic insulation is only one aspect of keeping your house cool and reducing your air conditioning costs. By "insulation," most folks mean thermal insulation that blocks heat conduction. This includes fiberglass, rock wool, foam and/or cellulose insulation on the attic floor and in the walls.

There are three modes of heat transfer—conduction, convection, and radiation. Conduction refers to heat flow typically through solid materials. This is how the handle of a metal skillet gets hot on the stove. Convection is similar to conduction, but occurs in fluids and gases. This is why you feel colder in the wind than in still air.

Regular thermal insulation in a home's walls and ceiling blocks conduction and convection heat losses. Most recommended insulation charts, which mention R-values, refer to thermal insulation.

The third mode of heat flow, radiation, is how the sun heats the Earth or you feel warm in front of an open fireplace. Unfortunately, standard thermal insulation is not very effective for blocking this type of heat flow. On a hot summer afternoon, a roof, especially a dark asphalt shingle one, gets extremely hot. This heat then radiates downward through the attic floor insulation and into your house.

Get up on a stable foot stool or ladder and put the back of your hand against the ceiling. If the ceiling really feels warmer than your walls, this may be a major reason for high electricity usage. Even with your air conditioner running and air in the room reasonably cool, you may still feel uncomfortable under a warm ceiling. This heat often causes you to set the air conditioner thermostat even lower, which further increases your electric bills.

This schematic shows the hot air flow from an attic through a ridge vent. Notice it is covered with shingles for a nice appearance.

If your house will need a new roof soon, replace it with light-colored—preferably white—shingles to reduce the roof temperature. Metal roofs, particularly aluminum ones with heat-reflective (not visibly reflective) paint, stay even cooler and minimize heat transfer down to the ceiling below.

Other than replacing the roof, adding more insulation and adequate attic ventilation can help significantly. When I installed more attic vents in my own home, I could immediately feel the difference in my second-floor bedroom temperature.

Putting in extra insulation will also cool ceilings that meet attic space because it blocks heat transfer. Attic vents, continuous ridge or inlet soffit, work best. This allows cool air to move low over the insulation, become less dense as it warms up, and then flow out the ridge vent.

Your attic and roof will still be hot, but extra insulation and ventilation will help cool the living space underneath your attic.

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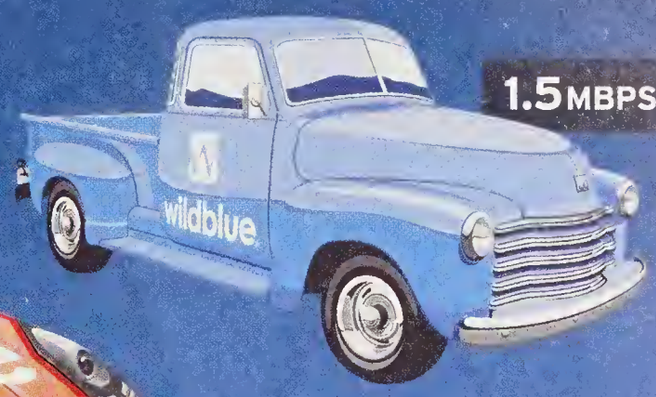

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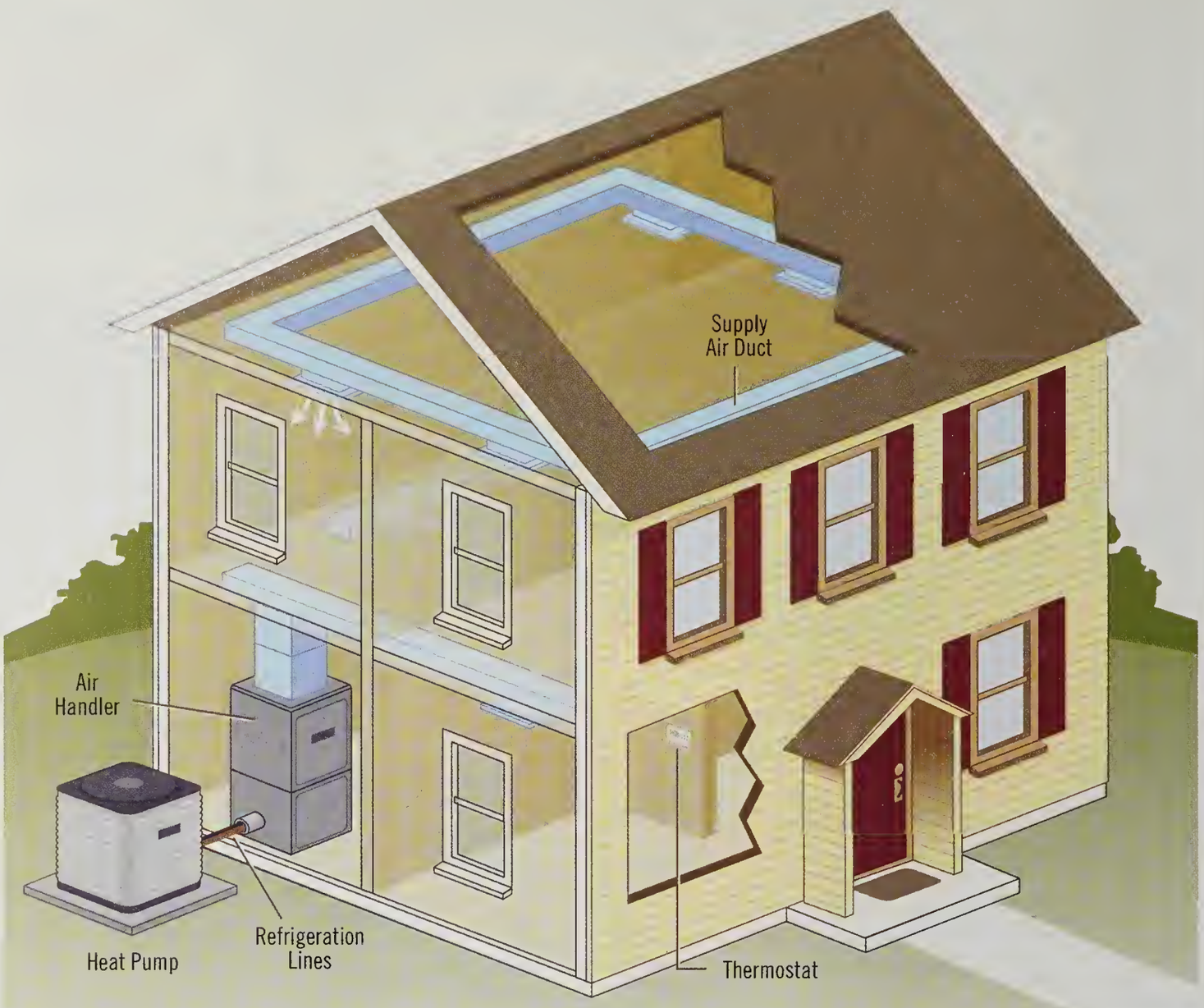


It's Not Magic, It's Efficiency

A consumer's guide to heat pump systems

By Megan McKoy-Noe

Magicians may pull rabbits out of hats, but many homeowners perform captivating acts of their own by taking natural heat and cooling power from air and earth and transforming it into conditioned comfort. Yet this act doesn't involve any sleight of hand trickery: it simply requires a heat pump.

Heat pumps move heat into residences during winter and out of them in summer, trimming overall home heating and cooling costs by as much as 40 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). In a national study, the Cooperative Research Network (CRN), a division of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association that monitors, evaluates and applies energy technologies, revealed 11 percent of homes use a heat pump as their primary heating/cooling system. For all-electric homes this jumps to 29 percent.

Different heat pumps succeed in specific regions. Air-source heat pumps work well in the Southeast, where temperatures rarely drop below freezing. In colder climates geothermal heat pumps shine because their heat source remains shielded — the top 10 feet of earth consistently measures between 50 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

A heat pump system can deliver value to your home if the model used matches your region and if it's installed properly. Here's a guide to three different types of heat pumps.

Geothermal

Outside temperatures may vary, but the earth's temperature remains steady year-round and can be harnessed to make homes comfortable. According to DOE, geothermal

heat pumps offer energy savings between 30 and 60 percent annually when compared to conventional baseboard or radiant heating systems, and are typically the most efficient heat pump option.

Geothermal heat pumps move a liquid or water through pipes buried in the ground, then into a home. Also called ground-source heat pumps, there are two types of units: a ground-water (open-loop) system uses well or pond water, while an earth-coupled (closed-loop) model uses a water and antifreeze solution. Systems can be installed horizontally or vertically, depending on available space.

Geothermal efficiency depends on climate, soil and water conditions, and landscaping. For example, soil that transfers heat easily requires less piping. Rocky terrain may require a vertical loop system instead of a more economical horizontal loop system.

When buying a geothermal system, compare two elements: coefficient of performance (COP) for heating, and the energy efficiency ratio (EER) for cooling. Energy Star-qualified models must provide a rating of at least 3.3 COP and 14.1 EER.

Air-source

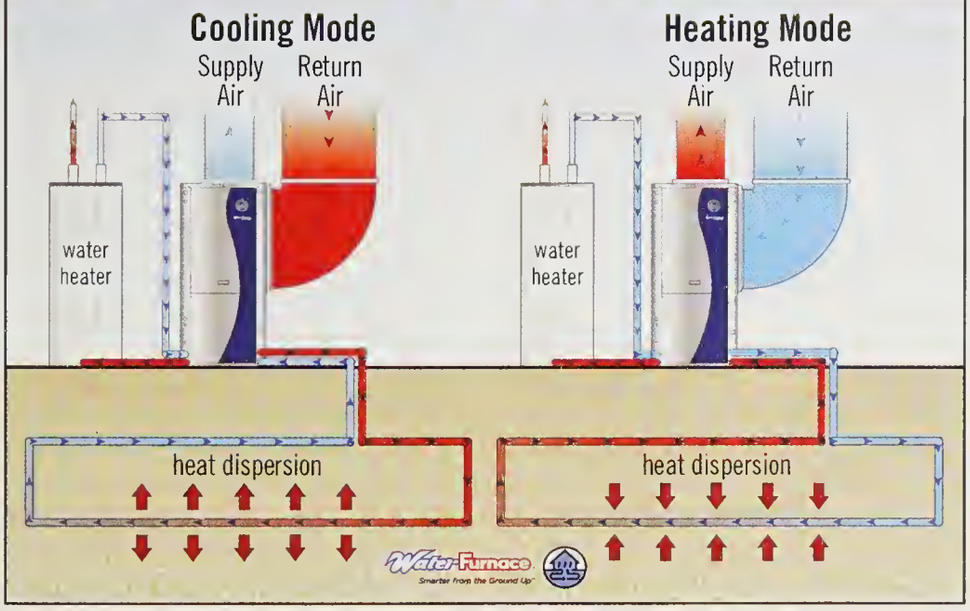
Air-source heat pumps use a system of coils to evaporate a refrigerant and, with it, draw heat away from a home, cooling the air. In winter the magic reverses with the flip of a valve, and your home heats.

The system delivers up to three times more heat energy than electricity consumed, but is not perfect. Air-source heat pumps often do not fare well in regions with sub-zero temperatures. A back-up system of electric resistance coils kicks-in when air temperatures dips below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, but this method of heating—similar to a toaster—isn't energy efficient, costing more to operate than traditional heating systems. Some air-source heat pump systems, notably reverse cycle chillers (RCC), offer heating alternatives to keep homes efficiently comfortable at lower temperatures—they store heat in an insulated tank of water. Others include gas-fired backup furnaces, also increasing their winter efficiency.

When shopping for an air-source heat pump, compare the seasonal energy efficiency rating (SEER) for cooling prowess, and heating seasonal performance

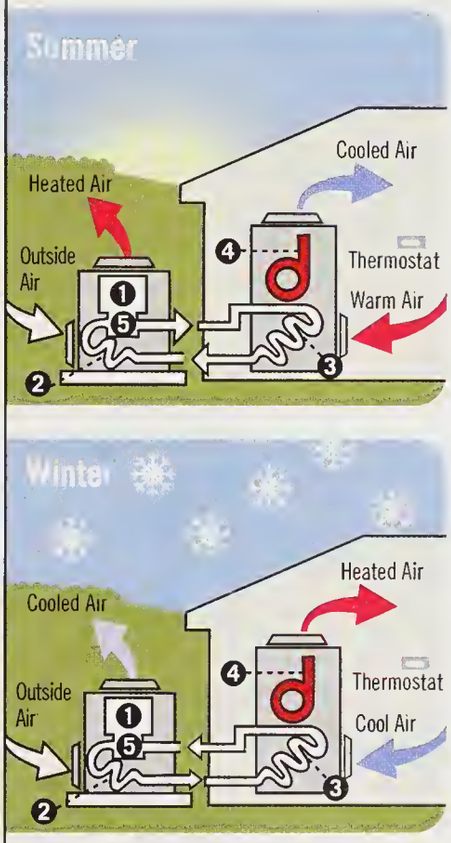
Continued on page 14

How Do Geothermal Heat Pumps Work?



How Do Air-Source Heat Pumps Work?

By transferring heat between a house and outside air, these devices trim electricity use by as much as 30 percent to 40 percent in moderate climates.



1 Compressor
Increases refrigerant/freon pressure to accept the maximum heat from the air.

2 Condenser
Coils move freon (and with it, hot or cold air) to or from outside air.

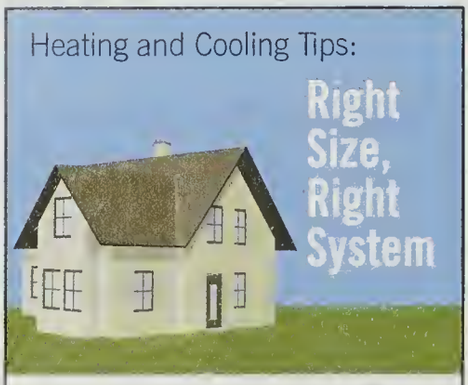
3 Evaporator
Coils move freon (and with it, hot or cold air) to or from outside air.

4 Air Handler
Fan blows air into a home's ducts.

5 Reversing Valve
Switches the direction of the freon flow, changing the heat pump's output to hot or cold air (controlled by thermostat).

Source: NRECA

Heating and Cooling Tips:



Choosing the right heating and cooling system for your home is a matter of asking the right questions, getting the right contractor, and installing the right size. Here are some tips:

Right Questions

- ☐ What's the weather like in my region?
- ☐ How many people live at my house?
- ☐ What type of energy efficiency upgrades have I made to tightly seal my house?

Right Contractor

- ☐ Only a NATE (North American Technician Excellence)-certified contractor should install your heating and cooling system.
- ☐ Your contractor should use computer software to calculate the size of system your home needs.

Right Size

- ☐ Systems that are too large are:
  - more expensive to install
  - break down more often
  - operate inefficiently.
- ☐ Central air conditioners and heat pumps that are too large don't run long enough to dehumidify the air, which can spur mold growth and leave inhabitants feeling clammy.

Need more information?
Visit TogetherWeSave.com.

Sources: EnergySavers.gov, Cooperative Research Network

Continued from page 13

factor (HSPF) for compressor and heating element strength. Energy Star models guarantee a SEER of 14 or more and a HSPF of 8 or more. For warmer climates, SEER is more important than HSPF; in colder climates find a system with a high HSPF.

Ductless/mini-split

In a twist of a classic magic trick, ductwork funneling conditioned air to different rooms can cause some air to "disappear"—which could waste from 15 to 20 percent of the energy used to heat or cool the air. While sealing air ducts and proper insulation helps, another option is to bypass ducts with a ductless version of an air-source heat pump (DHP), also called a "mini-split" heat pump.

Small and versatile, ductless heat pumps have two main parts: an outdoor compressor/condenser and one or more indoor air-handling units. These components are linked by a cable (refrigerant line). Many systems offer up to four indoor units to condition different rooms, and some systems come with wireless remotes or wall-mounted control units.

According to CRN, these devices use an estimated 50 to 60 percent less energy than electric resistance for heating. DHPs are ideal for room additions where ductwork may not be possible, or for homes with "non-ducted" air conditioning such as window units. Indoor models can be mounted in the ceiling, hung on the wall or placed on the floor.

DHPs are costly—30 percent more expensive than traditional central air systems (not including ductwork). Installation can also be tricky—if a system is too big for the space, energy will be wasted and the correct temperature may not be reached.

Innovation boosts efficiency

Heat pump technology isn't new—geothermal has been used since the 1940s—but innovations are improving performance and efficiency.

Dual-source heat pumps combine geothermal systems and air-source technologies. Though not as efficient as true geothermal systems, the device costs less than putting in a geothermal system and avoids some of air-source's pitfalls during cold weather.

Another technology advancement, two-speed compressors, condition the desired amount of air (heating or cooling capacity) needed at different times—standard compressors only operate at full capacity. Having this option reduces compressor wear and saves energy.

With all heat pumps, compressor design further enhances performance—a scroll compressor offers quieter operation and provides 10 to 15 degrees Fahrenheit of warmer air in heating mode, when compared to systems with traditional piston-driven compressors.

Some heat pumps offer variable-speed or dual-speed motors for fans (indoor and outdoor) that minimize drafts and keep air flowing at a comfortable rate.

Megan McKoy-Noe writes on energy efficiency issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Magen Howard and Brian Sloboda of NRECA and Rick Schroeder of North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation contributed to this article.

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Geothermal Energy Association, International Ground Source Heat Pump Association, 2010 CRN Residential Appliance and Equipment Survey

Rebates and tax credits

Although heat pumps are more expensive than traditional air conditioning, rebates and tax credits can help cut the cost. A federal tax credit equal to 30 percent of the cost for materials and installation, with no limit on total project expenses, applies to geothermal heat pumps through Dec. 31, 2016. A list of requirements can be found at www.energystar.gov/taxcredits.

North Carolina offers a tax credit through Dec. 31, 2015, of up to $8,400 for geothermal heat pumps used for non-business purposes. To find more North Carolina energy-related incentives, check the Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency at www.dsireusa.org.

North Carolina also offers a sales tax exemption on Energy Star-qualified air-source heat pumps during the first weekend of November.

Some electric cooperatives offer both rebates and low-cost loans for qualified heat pump installations. Contact your cooperative for more information.

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Down to Earth

Carolina horsemen rediscover the joy of plowing

Story and photos by Tina L. LaValle

On a sunny Saturday morning, a group of horsemen assemble in a windswept field outside Broadway, N.C., and watch as John Hudson harnesses a dream team. Six massive Percheron horses weighing nearly a ton each, four blacks and two grays, stand three abreast before a new Pioneer two-bottom plow. With a word from the driver, the six surge forward as one, and the plows are lowered into the sandy loam. The team soon finds its rhythm and dirt peels from the glistening plowshares. After a few minutes of shared admiration, other teamsters return to their horses and begin cutting their own inspired furrows.

Man and beast have toiled together like this in the fields of North Carolina for more than 300 years. It was an essential task of brute labor, filled with sweat, dust and blisters. Many of our grandparents spent their youth lining up furrows behind a team of mules and praying for the day their daddy could afford a tractor. How amazed they would be to learn that horse plowing is one of the fastest-growing equine activities in the state today.

North Carolina's very active horse plowing club, the North Carolina Work Horse and Mule Association, hosts a number of plow days and heritage farming demonstrations throughout the state and has experienced considerable growth in membership. "We started in 1999 with only six members and now we have over a hundred," said Debbie Denton, past secretary of the N.C. Work Horse and Mule Association. "We have been inspired by the efforts of organizations in other states and by publications such as Rural Heritage, which promotes the use of draft animals in farming. This is what the term 'living history' is all about."

On Saturdays throughout the spring and fall, club members at designated field days work their teams and help visitors understand the fine art of turning soil. Events held in the eastern part of North Carolina are often the best attended, since teamsters and animals alike appreciate the ease of working in the sandy, rock-free fields. It is not unusual for more than a dozen participants to attend a plow day, along with an amazing array of animals and equipment. Although plowing is generally considered to be the forte of mules and draft horses, almost any animal can be trained for the job. Don't be surprised to see oxen, ponies, donkeys or even a water buffalo take their place in the furrow. Most work is done with pairs, but multiple hitches of three, four or six are common sights at Carolina plow days.

A tradition with meaning

Equipment can be as diverse as the animals. You can quickly recognize the familiar wooden-handled walking plow, but many teamsters opt for the sulky or riding plow. Many of the implements are meticulously restored antiques, but an equal number are newly manufactured. Many countries still depend on animal power for agriculture, as do the Amish in the U.S., and the equipment is designed specifically for these markets. "Most people think that improvements to horse-drawn farm equipment ended around the turn of the century," says Denton. "But technology has continued to make

A plow day offers a rare opportunity to see large field hitches in action. Here two six-horse hitches and three teams join to break ground at the Annual Indian Ridge Corn Planting.

State Championship Is June 2

The North Carolina State Championship Plowing Contest will be held June 2 in Linden, Cumberland County. For more information, call Bobby Wellons at (910) 897-6700.

The North Carolina Work Horse and Mule Association holds plow days throughout the fall and spring. To find an event near you, visit www.ncworkhorseandmuleassociation.org

Many of the plow teams are Percheron draft horses. The massive black or gray horses can stand six feet at the shoulder and weigh nearly a ton each.

plows easier and safer to use, and this has helped animal power to remain a viable alternative in many situations."

Regardless of whether their equipment is new or antique, most teamsters feel a deep responsibility to the tradition of animal-powered agriculture and try to portray yesterday's farming practices as accurately as possible. "Education is a big part of what we do," says Denton. "Many children today have no idea where their food comes from. When they see us doing a demonstration, we want them to understand that what we are doing was once a vital life skill."

While tradition is important, most will say that it is the bond formed with their animals that brings them to the field. Plowing looks easy when done well, and the casual observer seldom realizes what a challenging feat it truly is. It can take many hours in the furrow for both plowman and team to master slicing earth in a straight line. The walking plow is especially difficult, as the driver must guide his team using both hands on the handles to keep the furrows straight. Teams often train with one person on the reins while another handles the plow, but with practice, the plowman and his animals develop a rapport that defines teamwork. "Being out here takes away the tension that I've built up all week," says Walter Cleary, wiping his brow behind a pair of sorrel mules. "The old folks thought that the outside of a horse was good for the inside of a man. I couldn't agree more."

The renewed interest in horse plowing has even earned official recognition. In 2009, the North Carolina Agricultural Commissioner sanctioned the first State Championship Horse Drawn Plowing Contest. Now in its fourth year, the event is held in June at the historic Ivy Burne Plantation near Linden and draws exhibitors from across North and South Carolina. Horses, mules and oxen compete for honors in a variety of classes, including walking plow, antique and modern riding plow, and a multiple hitch division for teams of three or more animals. Judges assess each entry in a designated plot, looking for the straightness, uniformity and coverage of the furrow, as well the proper adjustment of equipment, and the appearance and performance of the team. Competitive plowing matches are uncommon in the U.S. but have a serious following in Canada, England and parts of Europe. Sponsoring the event has been a dream of the N. C. Work Horse Association for a long time, says Denton. "We hope that with increased sponsorships, it can continue to grow and draw participants from nearby states."

North Carolina plowmen have also set their competitive sights on a larger scale. In 2011, club members Jessee Aldridge and John Flowers and their teams journeyed to Ohio to compete in the National Plowing Championships, earning second and third placings in their divisions. Their impressive effort has led to an open invitation from the National Championship committee to members of the N.C. Work Horse Association.

Visitors are always welcome at plow days, including those who wish to experience plowing firsthand. Children and teenagers are especially encouraged to try their hand at a skill that goes back more than 5,000 years, yet still puts food on the table in many parts of the world. One word of caution: plowing can be addictive. Most of today's teamsters discovered their passion with a visit to a plow day. All you need is an appreciation of working animals and the will to transform a job into a labor of love.

Tina LaValle is a farm secretary and freelance writer who lives in Randolph County. A lifelong horsewoman, she has been involved, along with her husband and son, in plowing for the last six years. The family is a member of Randolph EMC.

Shannon Hoffman

Agility, Stability, Stamina

The U.S. Army relies on the mule to go where other pack animals cannot go. But the mule must want to go there, too.

By Donna Campbell Smith

You might be as surprised to learn that in this modern age mules are still employed by our military. Even with the available high-tech equipment it turns out there are some places in the world that are only accessible on foot—make that on four hooves. Mules were used extensively during World Wars I and II. The last two mule units were officially deactivated in 1957. Mules were put back into service in 1994 in Haiti and have been used in Afghanistan since 2001. The hardy hybrids are used in those and other locations to pack in equipment and soldiers to places otherwise inaccessible.

Donna Campbell Smith

Muleskinner Kenneth Tyndall, the "Mule Man of Hoke County."

Since few 21st-century soldiers have prior experience working with pack animals, they have to learn some muleskinning skills. Muleskinning is the old-time title given to mule trainers. Special Forces soldiers receive that training right here in North Carolina under instruction by Kenneth Tyndall, aka "Mule Man of Hoke County," a local muleskinner. The title of muleskinner simply means he trains and handles mules; no actual skinning is involved. Kenny has been training mules for about 25 years. He has been teaching Special Forces soldiers those skills for the past 15 years.

In 2004 the U.S. Army's John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg issued a 225-page field manual titled "Special Forces Use of Pack Animals." The manual covers selection, care and training of the mule and other pack animals. It describes mules as intelligent, agile and having great stamina. It also credits the mule as being more sure-footed than a horse in

rugged terrain. The description goes on to say, "Mules are intelligent and possess a strong sense of self-preservation. A packer cannot make a mule do something if the mule thinks it will get hurt, no matter how much persuasion is used. Therefore many people confuse this trait with stubbornness."

The mind of a mule

I asked Tyndell what a soldier does when a mule refuses to do something. He gave an example and a three-step solution.

"Say you ride up to a dark shadow and the mule is skittish about stepping onto it. Let them sit and just think about it a while, then ask again. You can't force a mule to do anything. If it still doesn't want to step on that shadow, walk around in a circle and come back to it. If that doesn't work you'll need another mule, a leader, and your mule will go and follow it."

Mules are chosen over horses and other pack animals because they are hardier and more sure-footed, taking those attributes from the donkey half of this hybrid equine. Mules are the offspring of a female horse (mare) with a male donkey (Jack).

U. S. Army Special Forces soldiers are trained to use whatever is available in whatever places they find themselves in order to get their job done. Mules, and sometimes donkeys, are readily available in many Middle Eastern countries where they are still used as beasts of burden and transportation.

Tyndall explains that mules are half as easy to keep up as a horse and will do their work on half the food. This makes them well suited and economical for transporting equipment and soldiers in countries like Afghanistan. The mules are acquired on location rather than shipped in as they were during the World Wars. The Army buys the animals from locals with the hope of finding well broke mules or donkeys. Tyndell grins and says it doesn't always happen that the animals are broke at all. That's where the mule-training instruction comes in very handy. The soldier may have to break the mule to pack and ride before he can use it.

With that in mind, one lesson Tyndall says he teaches his soldiers is, "Never pack anything on your mule that you have to have—like your weapon." He laughed and explained that you cannot count on your mule staying put, and when he takes off all the gear in his pack is going to go with him. Tyndell teaches the soldiers that they need to carry all essentials for a day or two on themselves such as their weapons, decoder, medical supplies and a day's supply of food.

"We always lose a mule, but they always come back," he said. "Sometimes the soldiers who come back from the country where they were stationed will tell me the mules they bought in a town ran away and they could never find them."

"Did you go back to where you got them?" he said he asks the soldiers. Tyndell says nine times out of 10 the mules just go back to where they came from.

Mule handling is only part what the Special Forces trainees learn in a fictional country called "Pineland." Pineland encompasses 15 counties in North Carolina, including Alamance, Anson, Cabarrus, Chatham, Davidson, Guilford, Hoke, Montgomery, Moore, Randolph, Richmond, Rowan, Scotland, Stanly and Union.

Role-playing between mock civilians and soldiers teaches the soldiers to interact with the native people of real countries where they will later be stationed. They learn local customs, how to barter and how to train local recruits.

Mule Man's work schedule leaves him plenty of time to enjoy his passion for mules and the outdoors. The training sessions last 14 days, and he is off 30 days between sessions. On those off days he thinks nothing of packing up and hitting the trail for days at a time with his own mules. Tyndall designed and built a unique wagon, a mule-driven motor home complete with a potbelly woodstove for warmth on chilly nights. His Facebook friends are invited to come along with messages like, "Come ridin' in the sandbox the weekend. Who's in?" To answer one, apparently new, friend, he explains the sandbox consists of 80,000 acres of the Sandhill Gameland in North Carolina's southern coastal plain, which offers over 1,000 miles of dirt roads, ideal for riding and driving mules and horses. Accompanied by his dog, Rimshot, Mule Man believes, "If you can't get there with mules, stay home."

A packer cannot make a mule do something if the mule thinks it will get hurt, no matter how much persuasion is used.

Donna Campbell Smith is a Carolina Country contributing writer and author of "The Book of Mules: Selecting, Breeding, and Caring for Equine Hybrids" (Lyons Press 2009). She lives in Franklinton.

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Cut office costs by saving energy

Air conditioning, heating, lighting, fax and copy machines, printers and computers—they all require energy and money to operate. Whether you are an eco-minded employee concerned about the environment or a business owner or manager seeking ways to cut costs, there are many ways to cut energy use at the office. Here is a checklist of energy conservation/efficiency measures to get you started:

Lighting

- Replace incandescent lights with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) or light-emitting diodes (LEDs) for desk lamps and overhead lighting. Using CFLs instead of comparable incandescent bulbs can save about 50 percent on your lighting costs. CFLs use only one-fourth the energy and last up to 10 times longer.
- Use dimmers, motion sensors or occupancy sensors to automatically turn off lighting when not in use to reduce energy use and costs. For example, install motion-activated lighting in bathrooms and storage closets.
- Turn off lights when you leave at night. (This seems simple, but people often forget to do this quick task. Put a sign up as a reminder to employees and/or the janitor.)
- Use natural lighting or daylighting. When feasible, turn off lights near windows.
- Use task lighting to illuminate work areas instead of brightly lighting an entire room.
- Close or adjust window blinds to block direct sunlight to reduce cooling needs during warm months. Overhangs or exterior window covers are most effective to block sunlight on south-facing windows.
- In the winter months, open blinds on south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your workspace. At night, close the blinds to reduce heat loss.

Office equipment

- Unplug equipment that drains energy when not in use (i.e. fans, coffeemakers, desktop printers, radios) or plug equipment into a power strip you can shut off.
- Replace desktop computers with energy-saving thin clients (a computer or computer program that relies on servers more for traditional computational roles), or switch to laptop computers and docking stations.
- Replace cathode ray tube (CRT) monitors with LED or liquid crystal display (LCD) monitors.
- Turn off your computer and monitors at the end of the work day. If you leave your desk for an extended time, turn off your monitor.
- Turn off the photocopier at night or purchase a new copier with a low standby feature.
- Purchase printers and fax machines with a power management feature and use it.
- Coordinate with the vending machine vendor to turn off advertising lights.

More energy management

- Have a qualified professional perform an energy audit. Check with your electric cooperative for names of auditors.
- Install devices to track energy use.
- Install programmable thermostats.
- Ensure HVAC ductwork is well insulated.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Retirement savings account is no college fund

By Doreen Friel

Whether you have a child who is applying to college now or years down the road, it might be tempting to consider dipping into your retirement savings. But when you borrow money from a 401(k) retirement plan to pay for college expenses, you're putting your own financial future at risk. You've worked a long time to build up your account, and borrowing money for a short-term need can hurt you in the long run.

Pitfalls of a retirement account loan

Here are some things to consider:

- There is a limit on how much you can borrow. Generally speaking, you can borrow only half of your account balance, up to $50,000.
- Some retirement plans will suspend your ability to make contributions when you take a loan. Even if you have a plan that doesn't, will you be able to afford making loan repayments and plan contributions at the same time?
- If you don't repay your loan according to your plan's rules, your "loan" may suddenly be classified as a "withdrawal." When that happens, you may be hit with a 10 percent early withdrawal penalty and you may have to pay regular income tax on your outstanding loan balance.
- If you lose your job, most plans require you to pay your loan back, in full, in a very short period of time (such as 60 days). If you can't, your loan will be considered a withdrawal and the penalties and taxes noted above may apply.

What about a Roth 401(k)?

If you absolutely must tap into retirement money to fund your children's college education as a last resort, consider withdrawing money you may have contributed to a Roth 401(k). If you only borrow your contributions (and not your account's investment earnings), you may not have to pay any taxes on the withdrawals because you paid tax when you made the contributions.

Whirlpool Corporation

To help pay for your children's college expenses, consider opening a 529 savings plan when they are young.

Alternatives to consider

A 529 savings plan: If you have a number of years before your children start college, you may want to open a 529 savings plan. It lets you set aside money for college without paying taxes on your savings account's investment earnings. And, if the money in your account is used to pay for qualifying educational expenses, you generally won't pay taxes on it.

Student loans and grants: Grants in particular are often overlooked as an option to fund college expenses. Check with a school guidance counselor or search online for local grant opportunities.

Other options: Technical schools that teach skilled trades and community colleges boasting reduced tuition rates can be good alternatives to four-year universities. Also, explore government-sponsored programs that trade service for tuition reimbursement.

One helpful website is www.finaid.org, where you can learn about types of loans, grants and scholarships and use calculators for college savings estimates.

Remember: If you borrow from your retirement plan account, you may also put your children's financial future at risk as they may have to be the ones to support you financially in your golden years.

Doreen Friel is a marketing communications consultant who produces materials for the Insurance & Financial Services Department of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

NC 529 program

North Carolina's college savings program is administered by the College Foundation of North Carolina. CFNC's website explains the NC 529 plan as well as provides helpful information about state and federal need-based grants and scholarships and more. Call (800) 600-3453 or visit www.cfnc.org.

Design tricks

Create interesting rooms by mixing patterns confidently

Novice home decorators tend to shy away from mixing patterns. Worried about how much is too much, they tend toward solid textures in their purchases or perhaps just a single print—and then end up with plain vanilla interiors.

Aim for patterns and colors that complement one another, rather than compete for attention.

"Marrying patterns is the hallmark of a confident designer," says Jan Jessup, director of communications for Calico Corners and Calico Home stores. "But even amateur home decorators can learn to combine prints and textures like a pro, with just a little knowledge, practice and trial."

What pattern adds to a space

While patterns in home furnishings certainly add visual interest, they also give the eye a place to focus. Pattern also hides a multitude of sins. A boxy chair that's seen better days can be softened with a great paisley print. A not-so-great view can be minimized by a pretty print on custom draperies. Pattern also adds personality to a room. "It can tell stories about your interests—from flower gardening to modern art, to literature, travel or sports," says Jessup.

Patterns that play well together

There are certain combinations that work beautifully together: a graphic print and a bold geometric jacquard; a paisley and a tartan plaid; a great floral print and a wide stripe; a toile and a check; a jacquard tapestry and velvet. Here are a few unifying principles to keep in mind:

- **Use a multi-color pattern** and then pull out colors from that for the rest of the room. If prints are not your style, go for multi-color stripes instead.
- **Vary the scale**—allow one pattern to be the hero and then let everything else play second fiddle. If decorating with a floral pattern, complement it with both plaids and checks—as long as one of them is small in scale. Pinstripes and small checks will be perceived as a solid color from a distance.
- **Mix up the textures**—a room of all informal, casual fabrics is too one-note—as is a room filled only with formal, lustrous textures and silks. Try silk with linen, cotton prints with velvet.
- **Repeat patterns for harmony**—if using a bold design on an ottoman, repeat it on a sofa pillow. A print drapery can be repeated on a bed coverlet or in shams.
- **Make it contemporary**—try adding a graphic pattern, geometrics or bold stripes to the room. Use them on upholstered chairs for greatest impact, or on pillows for colorful accents.

Location, location, location

If choosing a pattern for a sofa or chair, that design will make a clear statement in the room. And the larger the piece, the bigger the statement. "Perhaps you won't want to see 22 yards of a bold floral on a sofa," Jessup says, "but it would look fabulous on a big chair and really showcase the design."

On the other hand, pattern used on window treatments tends to soften among the folds and pleats of curtains and shades—and becomes much less prominent. A great pattern that is showcased on top of a bed can also be used at the window where it will recede in the fullness of a drapery.

Harmonious color

Sometimes customers come in, Jessup says, with a swatch of fabric or carpet or wallpaper—and they want that very *exact* color, no substitutes. She says a "matchy-matchy" approach can result in a formulaic design. Step back from your swatches and paint colors, she adds—and focus on whether they appear harmonious together.

Calico Home stores are among retail fabric stores that provide decorating advice and free in-home design consultation. For more information, visit www.CalicoCorners.com or call (800) 213-6366.

Let's Talk TRASH

Sending your paper trash to recycling really helps

First in a series by Amy Ney

North Carolinians generate a lot of trash. We throw away food scraps, old clothing, broken appliances, yard waste, product packaging, single-serving containers, cans, plastic bottles and bags, baby diapers, magazines, disposable dishware, fast food wrappers, and the list goes on. But do we think about where all these items go? Or about what happens after our waste is dropped off at the convenience/ collection center or is loaded onto the garbage truck?

Some waste may first travel to a transfer station where it is sorted and the recyclable and compostable items are removed, but much waste goes directly to a landfill—a giant engineered hole in the ground that is designed to hold our waste while protecting the environment from it.

Landfills may solve one aspect of waste disposal, but in so doing, they create numerous others. First, we are quickly filling them up. In 2007 North Carolinians produced 11.86 million tons of refuse. We throw away about nine times more than we recycle. And items that are banned from disposal in North Carolina landfills, such as aluminum cans, plastic bottles and other rigid plastic recyclable containers, still find their way into the trash in record numbers. Secondly, most landfills are designed so that items do not decompose. Sunlight, moisture and oxygen—all necessary for decomposition to occur—are missing from the piles of compacted and covered fill. So, even items that are biodegradable in your compost bin will last indefinitely in a landfill. In one study that excavated 30 tons of waste from 15 landfills located across the U.S., newspapers, magazines and other paper comprised approximately half of the contents, and were still readable over 40 years later. Thirdly, everyone wants the convenience of trash disposal, but no one really wants a landfill in their backyard. Finally, landfills can cost upward of $250,000 per acre to develop, and once they are filled, we must find a new site and begin the process again.

In this series, we'll look at some of the common items that we throw away that are environmentally harmful or fill up landfill space, and what we can do about this waste. Paper alone accounts for approximately 40 percent of landfill usage. Plastic grocery bags, which take up very little space, are making a big impact on our environment in other ways. Plastic

bottles, which we routinely buy filled with water from here and abroad, are another contributor to the waste stream.

Paper

Paper found in our landfills comes from a variety of sources—product packaging, newspapers, magazines, phone books, junk mail. Every year, North Carolinians throw away more than $164 million worth of mixed paper. If we just recycled all of our newspaper in the U.S., it would prevent the harvesting of 250 million trees while still providing raw materials to make new paper products. Paper mills actively use recovered recycled paper to produce new paper that requires 60 percent less energy and 59 percent less water to create, and emits much less air and water pollution than making paper from virgin wood pulp. In addition to preserving natural resources and protecting the environment, recycling paper also saves room in our landfills—one ton of paper takes up over 3.3 cubic yards of landfill space. Probably the biggest impact we could have on our landfills would be to recycle paper—including phone books, junk mail, newspaper ads and anything else made from a tree—and then buy recycled paper. To increase your impact, encourage your local businesses to recycle and use reusable, recyclable and compostable materials, and then support the ones that do.

Amy Ney is a freelance writer in Canton and a member of Haywood EMC.

Next month: *The Problem With Plastic Bags*

Unwanted mail

One easy way to reduce the amount of paper that you receive is to eliminate unwanted mail from your mail box. The Direct Marketing Association (DMA) offers an online tool to help you control which paper and electronic mail you receive and which you don't. To set your preferences and tell direct marketers to remove your mailing address from their lists, visit the site www.dmachoice.org. If you receive duplicates of a publication, or a catalog that you don't want, contact the publishers directly and ask to be removed from their mailing list.

Note: *North Carolina's electric cooperatives publish Carolina Country magazine as a major means of communicating with their member-owners. Each cooperative maintains its own mailing list and does not share it or sell it to anyone else.*

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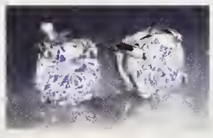

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The Mill Town That Never Closed

How Cooleemee retained the heritage that defined its character

By Carla Burgess

A World War II bond rally in front of the Cooleemee Mill (Erwin Mills #3).

The Textile Heritage Center in the town of Cooleemee (pronounced COO-luh-mee) has humble roots. It began as just a bulletin board behind plexiglass at the post office. Today it fills a historic two-story house that was built for a general manager of the local cotton mill in 1923.

The mill was erected on the banks of the South Yadkin River in Davie County at the turn of the 20th century and operated until 1969. In its heyday, in the 1940s, some 1,800 workers heeded its whistle. Many of those workers and their descendents still live in Cooleemee, a town of 960 people, and their memories have lent authenticity to a sweeping, homegrown history project.

Shortly after word got out in 1989 that the Cooleemee Historical Association wanted to record old-timers' stories about mill life, the tape was rolling. Men and women, mostly from the World War II generation, shared not only their stories of life on the work floor, but also what it was like living within the confines of a town built for one purpose: to turn cotton into cloth. Some of what they said surprised the interviewers. Rather than lengthy tales of deprivation, Cooleemee's former doffers, carders, spinners and weavers described working in a tough environment while having a measure of autonomy that made them feel valued. They also recalled a tight-knit community where neighbors were more than co-workers—they were like family.

The town, owned by the mill, was provincial and cosmopolitan at the same time. On the one hand, mill families could maintain many of the traditions of self-sufficiency they'd had as farmers. Their homes sat on lots big enough for a garden, a few chickens and a smokehouse. On the other hand, they had some city-style amenities, like a department store, drug store, cafe, library and even a movie theater in the town square. Millworkers had their own traveling concert band, and the Cooleemee Cools had their own lighted baseball field and grandstand.

The duality in old Cooleemee created what Lynn Rumley calls "an industrial folk culture." Rumley is the director of the Textile Heritage Center and the town's mayor. She is a passionate curator of Cooleemee history and the southern cotton mill culture at large. Rumley was usually the interviewer with whom Cooleemee's elders shared their recollections. To date, the center has amassed 120 hours of video from 30 subjects. The center has also archived thousands of pages of written histories from 151 mill families.

The community stayed together

Some of the personal stories have illuminated the somewhat unique story of labor relations in Cooleemee. Given the comparatively small foothold of organized labor in the

The Spinning Room hands at Cooleemee Mill, 1911.

Minnie Grimes on the job in the mill.

South, it may surprise a lot of people to learn that the Cooleemee mill was unionized, though it came about atypically. When 65,000 North Carolina textile workers walked off their jobs during the industry-wide General Textile Strike of 1934, the Cooleemee mill hands were not among them. They believed that company officials promised they would not thrust upon them the new, increasingly common practice of "scientific management," in which workloads were doubled and tripled and mill workers toiled to the tick of the stopwatch. The so-called "industry engineers" even timed bathroom visits. The general strike of 1934 was an abject failure in the South, with organizers unable to enlist enough members to successfully bargain on the workers' behalf.

In Cooleemee, company higher-ups eventually brought in "time study managers," prodding workers to operate more machines in less time. "In place of them sticking with us, they really stuck it to us," said John Henry Nail, who was in his 80s when historians interviewed him. "(They) brought the checkers in here and put more work on us." For decades, mill hands had worked hard in exchange for not only a paycheck, but some unofficial fringe benefits—such as time off to kill hogs, go hunting, tend to a sick family member or even take an extended break from the work floor when they were caught up.

"My father was the overseer in the spinning room," said former mill hand Fred Pierce. "When they doffed all the frames they'd just go up the river and take a swim, you know, until the bobbins got full again, and then he'd go out and whistle or holler and they'd all come back in and start doffing again." Cooleemee workers wouldn't stand for the loss of independence. In 1937, they unionized, with 90 percent of the workers paying dues.

Former doffers, carders, spinners and weavers described working in a tough environment while having a measure of autonomy that made them feel valued.

Cooleemee's former mill workers and their families have contributed way more than words to the story of their past. As news of the history project spread, people shook out their attics, dug into cedar chests, and pilfered scrapbooks and photo albums. More than 3,000 old photographs have been donated to the center and digitized for its archives. The Mill Village Museum, housed on the center's first floor, is filled with artifacts that document the routines of work and play, school, worship and home life. There's also an auxiliary building, the Mill House Museum, an original mill house furnished with donated items—including a wood stove, beds, quilts, tables, armchairs and rockers, enameled bowls, cast iron pots and pans, butter churns and canning jars—everything a typical mill family would have used in the early 1930s. Almost all the artifacts were collected locally.

Cooleemee's cotton mill closed in 1967, putting its last 750 workers on the street. A closing often spells the death of a mill town, but most people stayed here, even if they had to drive out of town to work, says Rumley. The Cooleemee Historical Association did a survey in 1996 and found that 75 percent of people living in the original mill houses were either native Cooleemeans or had Cooleemee roots, she says. "I think Cooleemee is one of the few mill towns in the South that have gone through a closing and remained intact in terms of a community." The mill building and some 330 original houses still stand, and now there are enough memories to fill them.

Carla Burgess is a Carolina Country contributing writer who lives in Raleigh.

To learn more...

...about the Textile Heritage Center or to become a supporting member of the Order of the Bobbin and Shuttle, visit www.textileheritage.org or write to Textile Heritage, P.O. Box 667, Cooleemee, N.C. 27014.

Sting fire ants *before they sting you*

Methods—chemical and non-chemical—for controlling fire ants

By Carole H. Howell

Because of mild winter weather, more fire ants than usual survived to grow their colonies this spring and summer.

"Our family was enjoying a cookout on the patio while our three-year-old played in the yard," says one grandfather. "Suddenly she began screaming and dancing in place. My first thought was a snake bite, but she was standing squarely on a fire ant mound. Ants were stinging between her toes and running up her ankles. For days afterward she had large, red, itchy bumps which finally required a trip to the doctor."

Red imported fire ants are more than pests creating large mounds in your yard. Fire ants can deliver a painful bite, but they actually sting, releasing venom that can create the same allergic reaction as a bee sting. Accidentally disturbing a nest quickly dispatches an aggressive, well-armed attack force prepared to defend the colony and its queen.

There are, however, steps you can take to control the damage to your property and reduce the danger to your children, pets and livestock.

According to N.C. State University Extension associate professor Mike Waldvogel, this year's milder winter was a boon for North Carolina's fire ants. Fewer colonies died out overall, and new mounds are popping up all over.

"It isn't practical to eradicate the ants," says Waldvogel. "In fact, it's nearly impossible. Using methods both chemical and non-chemical is the best way to control fire ants."

"Ants spread from migrating from large colonies into smaller ones several feet away," explains Waldvogel. They are also spread through landscaping material such as infested soil, plantings, and hay and wheat straw.

Start by controlling their food source. "Like my college students, fire ants enjoy greasy foods, so make sure that any outside garbage containers are bagged, well-covered and stored away from the house."

Waldvogel recommends treating individual mounds with a drenching method because it's faster, uses less insecticide, and is better for the environment. In spring, treat the mounds mid-day when the ants are higher in the nest. In the heat of summer, the best time to treat is in the early part of the morning and later in the afternoon.

Using a shovel dusted well with talcum powder (to reduce the chance that the ants will climb the shovel), thrust deeply into the mound to open it, and drench the nest with pesticide. If you would rather skip the chemicals, open up the mound and spread the ants and the soil away from the nest. The key is to kill the queen.

Another method, although slower, uses bait specifically designed for fire ants. Sprinkle the bait around the perimeter of the mound to attract the ants to the tasty poison. Waldvogel recommends buying only the amount of bait you can use in a single season. Hot storage areas can cause the oily base to become rancid and less attractive to the ants. Using bait around children and pets requires special care. Always read and follow the directions for using any pesticide.

Other killing methods, such as using gasoline to burn out the mound, are dangerous and harmful to your lawn and the environment. "Some people tell me that their method is to sprinkle grits or flour on the mound. This is actually totally ineffective," says Waldvogel.

If you are stung, physicians recommend cool compresses and oral antihistamines to control the itch. To avoid infection, keep the area clean and don't scratch or "pop" the pustules. Hydrocortisone creams can control inflammation at the site.

The best way to avoid the pain and itch is to avoid fire ants altogether. Take measures to control and eliminate fire ant colonies, watch your step, and enjoy your yard and garden safely.

Carole H. Howell is a writer in Lincolnton. Learn more about her at www.walkerbranchwrites.com

Two-Minute Tomatology

by L.A. Jackson

There are two kinds of tomato varieties: hybrid and non-hybrid. Hybrids like 'Early Girl', 'Better Boy' and 'Whopper' have been top choices with Carolina Country gardeners because of their vigor and productivity. However, many hybrids have come under fire from tomato purists for not having full flavor.

Non-hybrid tomatoes, which includes heirlooms such as the well-liked 'Cherokee Purple', 'German Johnson' and 'Mortgage Lifter', generally have great taste, but tend to be less resistant to many common tomato problems (although there are exceptions). Non-hybrids have another advantage: Their seeds can be saved to produce another crop next year.

Tomato varieties can also be either "indeterminate" or "determinate." Indeterminates are the tomatoes typically grown by most gardeners today. Once the plants start producing, they can bear tomatoes into the early fall, if kept healthy.

Determinate tomatoes develop almost all of their fruit over a short period of time. They also are normally restrained in height, which is desirable for small veggie patches and patio gardens. Popular determinate selections include the heirloom 'Marglobe' and the hybrid 'Celebrity'.

One more thing to look for in a tomato variety is resistance to four particular nasties that can mess up a 'mater patch: Fusarium wilt, verticillum wilt, nematodes and tobacco mosaic. Fortunately, there are varieties that resist some or all of these garden troubles. If the labels on the plants or seeds have the letters "F," "V," "N" and/or "T" on them, that means the varieties are less susceptible to these problems.

Garden To-Do's

June

- Pick the spent flowers of such annual ornamentals as marigolds, petunias, salvias and zinnias to encourage even more blooms.
- Prevent bitter cucumbers by putting the plants on a regular watering schedule if the rains don't come and mulching them heavily.
- Herbs are usually at their harvesting best just before flowering when they contain the maximum in essential oils.
- Now is a great time to add a few tropical water lilies to the backyard pond. Don't forget to include fertilizer in each pot, as these heavy-feeders need the nutrients for maximum flower production.
- If you weed by hand, remember the best way to prevent even more weeds is to pull the pesky plants before they develop seed heads. Also, right after a soaking rain is the easiest time to pull them up with their roots intact.

July

- Cut your lawn's grass when it is dry, not wet. This will not only help prevent soil compaction and turf injury, but it will also lessen the spread of grass diseases.
- Grass suddenly die? It might not be from lack of water. Dig into the dead area to check for signs of underground grub infestation.
- Pick vegetables such as beans, okra, squash, peppers, cucumbers and indeterminate tomatoes on a regular basis to encourage the plants to produce even more.
- If hot weather is melting holes in the flower border, replant with such heat-loving annuals as celosias, marigolds, periwinkle, portulaca, salvias and zinnias.

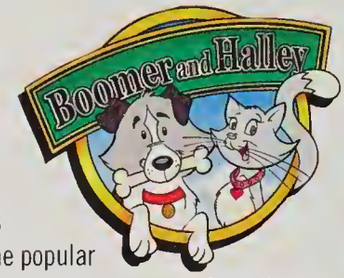
L.A. Jackson is the former editor of Carolina Gardener Magazine. If you would like to ask him a question about your garden, contact L.A. at: lajackson1@gmail.com.

Tip of the Month

Have coffee grounds left over from that last pot of java? When lightly sprinkled on and then mixed in with garden dirt, the slightly acidic grounds are good for plants because they attract earthworms—those wonderful wigglers that constantly work to improve the soil. Coffee grounds are also a great additive for making compost because their high carbon-to-nitrogen ratio helps the pile break down, especially one filled with the fallen leaves of autumn.

Getting To Know...

Bob Ostrom



Known for: Award-winning children's book illustrator

About: Bob Ostrom's work has been featured in more than 200 children's books and publications, including the popular Herbie Bear series and Boomer & Halley books for which he won Mom's Choice and Pinnacle awards. His first taste of art success came in third grade when he traded a monster drawing for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Later, while attending art school in Boston he entered a drawing contest and won $500 and an artwork contract. After graduating, he worked with different companies, designing logos, doing paste up, conceptual art, storyboarding, toy design and art direction. But he always dreamed of becoming a children's book illustrator and had his first book title published at age 30. Bob also worked in licensed art with companies such as Disney, Nickelodeon and Warner Brothers, and his portfolio includes well-known images such as Ninja Turtles. Today, he is represented by an agent, with freelance clients all over the world, and also enjoys teaching illustration classes. He and his family live in Cary.

Quote: "If you can find something you are passionate about, you'll stick with it. That's the key."

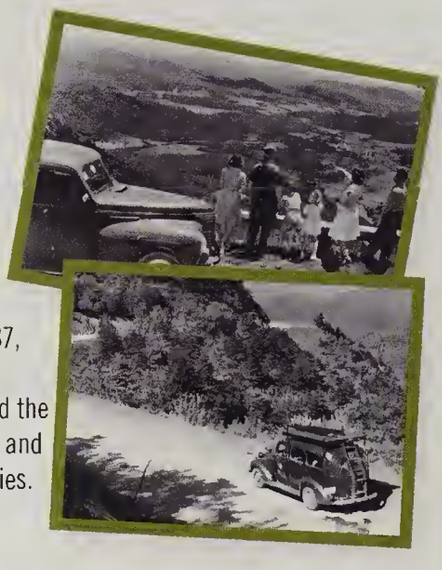
Free stuff: Bob offers fun video tutorials, downloadable e-books and coloring pages showing kids how to draw everything from reindeers to aliens on http://bobostromstudio.com.

Illustrations: Bob Ostrom. Photo: Robert King of Octave Blue.

Girl Scouts create their own badges now

Girl Scouts of the USA recently created a Make Your Own Badge program in which girls select a skill they want to learn, then create the badge for that skill themselves. Girls take part in everything from setting earning requirements to designs. Badges come in categories: Legacy, Financial Literacy, Cookie Business, Skill Building, and Make Your Own, and scouts can still earn longtime badges such as Athlete. The organization has transformed itself to focus on leadership development, and offers digital programming for girls ages 5 through 17 so they can engage in an online community of girls changing the world. GSUSA has 3.2 million girl and adult members. For information on becoming a member or an adult volunteer, call (800) 478-7248 or visit www.girlscouts.org.

Drive through time on the Blue Ridge Parkway



Built between 1934 and 1987, the Blue Ridge Parkway's construction radically altered the landscape in North Carolina and Virginia mountain counties. It also sparked intense controversy. "Driving Through Time," an online humanities project, explores its development in North Carolina through historic photographs, maps, news articles and oral histories. You can explore chronologically, geographically or by topics, and interactive maps layer historical maps atop current road maps so you can compare the parkway's dramatic impact. Anne Mitchell Whisnant, an associate professor of history at UNC-Chapel Hill and the project's adviser, included student essays on issues such as how the new parkway affected Cherokee Indians. There's also K–12 lesson plans to help students use the site's materials. www.docsouth.unc.edu/blueridgeparkway.

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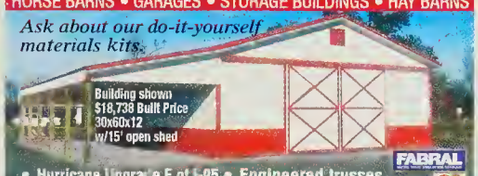

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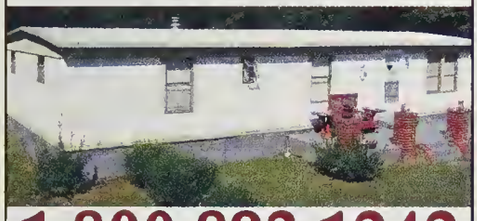

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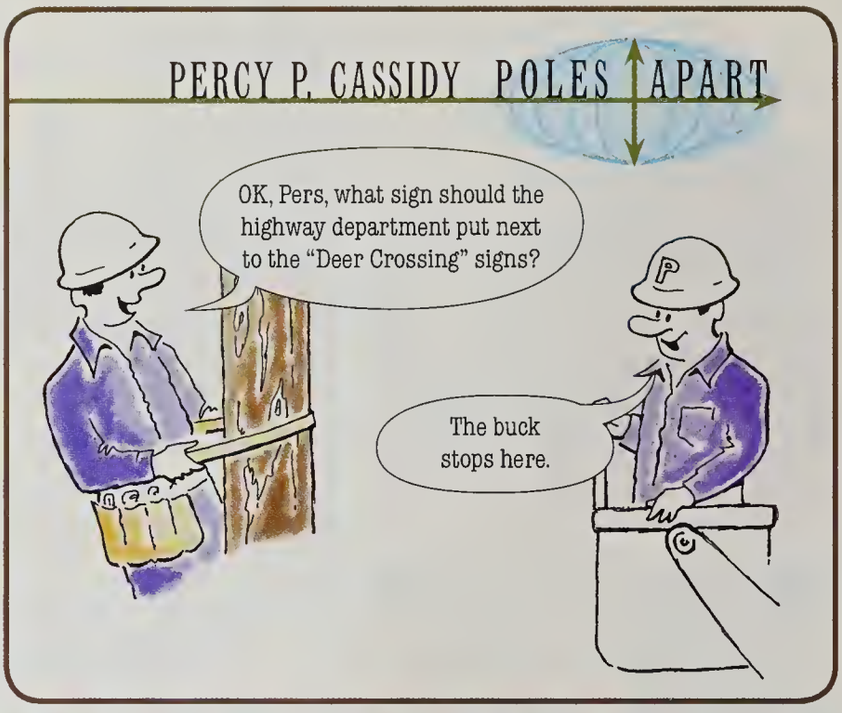
RAISE x L = LOWER

You can reach Charles Joyner by e-mail: joyner@carolinacountry.com

Limerick

An insurance adjuster named Sheen
fell in an upholstery machine,
where he soon discovered
he was fully covered.
Do you understand what I mean?
-cgj


PERCY P. CASSIDY POLES APART
OK, Pers, what sign should the highway department put next to the "Deer Crossing" signs?
The buck stops here.

UNSCRAMBL'IT

Cy Nical says,
Obese people are becoming

W _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
e a c r l m b r s c

Use the capital letters in the code key below to fill in the blanks above.

"A D E I P R S W" means
s c r a m b l e

Domi-No.s

Each letter in this multiplication problem stands for a digit. Repeated letters stand for repeated digits.

Given L=3, can you replace the missing digits that change RAISE to LOWER?

R	A	I	S	E
			X	3 / L
3 / L	O	W	E	R

Squared Off

$13^2 = 169$
$14^2 = 196$

How quickly can you find a third number whose three-digit square is composed of the digits 1, 6, and 9?

If you are a teacher at a North Carolina high school and would like to have a book of puzzles like this for your students, we can tell you of an opportunity for how you can get these books. Send e-mail to joyner@carolinacountry.com

For answers, please see page 31

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By e-mail: where@carolinacountry.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country?
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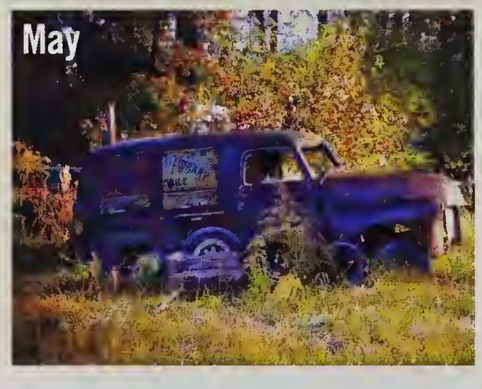
Raleigh, NC 27611

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our July issue, will receive $25.



May winner

The May photo showed an old truck by a roadside. No one guessed correctly where it was, because it's no longer there. We learned after we published this that the car used to be off of Hwy. 54 near Jacksonville. Karen Doody, a member of Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative, made the photograph. As far as we know, the photograph above shows something that's still there.

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June Events

Paddle to raise funds for fallen and wounded service men and women during the "Kayak for the Warriors" event on June 8–9 in Pine Knoll Shores. The 3.2-mile-route runs along the town's beautiful canal and Bogue Sound. Register up to race day for $45 (includes shirt and lunch). Call (252) 808-2998 or visit www.kayakforthewarriors.org to learn more.

Mountains

Vinyl Brothers Big Band
Bridge Park Pavilion
June 1, Sylva
(800) 962-1911
www.mountainlovers.com

Liver Mush Festival
June 1, Marion
(828) 652-2215

Quilt Art By The Shady Ladies
June 1–3, Canton
(828) 400-5045
www.lakelogan.org

Phoenix Piano Trio
June 2, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787
www.ashecountyarts.org

On The Move Family Wellness Day
Guided hikes, health screenings
June 2, Chimney Rock State Park
(828) 287-6113
www.chimneyrockpark.com

The Outlander
Story of outdoorsman Horace Kephart
June 2–16, Burnsville
(828) 682-4285
www.parkwayplayhouse.com

Arts & Crafts Show
June 2–3, Black Mountain
(828) 231-3594
www.olddepot.org

Breeding Birds
Guided bird walk
June 3, Chimney Rock State Park
(828) 287-6113
www.chimneyrockpark.com

Stars Over the Smokies
Quilters Guild lectures, classes, vendors
June 7–10, Cullowhee
(828) 524-9955
www.smokymtnquilters.org

89th Saddlebred Charity Horse Show
L.M. Tate Horse Show Grounds
June 7–10, Blowing Rock
(336) 469-8207
www.Blowingrockequestrian.com

Rafe Hollister
Roots music, Bridge Park Pavilion
June 8, Sylva
(800) 962-1911
www.mountainlovers.com

Handcrafter's Guild Craft Show
June 8–9, Brevard
(828) 884-9908

"A Cool 5" Race Weekend
June 8–10, Beech Mountain
(828) 387-3003
www.ACool5.com

Listing Information

Deadlines:
For Aug.: June 25
For Sept.: July 25

Submit Listings Online:
Visit www.carolinacountry.com and click "See NC" to add your event to the magazine and/or our website. Or e-mail events@carolinacountry.com.

The Asheboro Farmers Market takes place every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Call (336) 626-1201 or visit www.asheboronc.gov.

Gallery Crawl
June 9, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787
www.ashecountyarts.org

Shelter Building
Survival skills workshop:
June 9, Chimney Rock State Park
(828) 287-6113
www.chimneyrockpark.com

Animal Birthday Party
June 13, Linville
(828) 733-2013
www.grandfather.com

Balsam Range
Bluegrass, Bridge Park Pavilion
June 15, Sylva
(800) 962-1911
www.mountainlovers.com

The Last Of The Mohicans
Movies on the Meadows series
June 16, Chimney Rock State Park
(828) 287-6113
www.chimneyrockpark.com

Bear W. Daylily Farm Festival
June 16, Morganton
(828) 584-3699
www.bearwdaylilyfarm.com

"What Were They Thinking?"
Haywood Community Band concert
June 17, Waynesville
(828) 456-4880

Mountain Faith
Gospel-bluegrass,
Bridge Park Pavilion
June 22, Sylva
(800) 962-1911
www.mountainlovers.com

Great American Backyard Campout
June 23–24, Chimney Rock State Park
(828) 287-6113
www.chimneyrockpark.com

Singing On The Mountain
June 24, Linville
(828) 733-2013
www.grandfather.com

Arts & Crafts Show
June 22–23, Lake Junaluska
(828) 648-0500
www.bracaorg.com

Buchanan Boys
Country-folk- rock,
Bridge Park Pavilion
June 29, Sylva
(800) 962-1911
www.mountainlovers.com

ONGOING

Street Dance
Monday nights, Hendersonville
(828) 693-9708
www.historichendersonville.org

Bluegrass Music Jam
Thursdays, Marion
(828) 652-2215

The Full Monty
Musical comedy
Through June 3, Hickory
(828) 327-3855
www.hct.org

Music At The Mills
Bluegrass, Friday nights
Through June 29, Union Mills
(828) 287-6113
www.unionmillslearningcenter.org

Art Walk
Through Nov. 2, Murphy
(828) 494-7403
www.valleyriverarts.com

Country/Bluegrass Jam Session
Friday nights, Lake Toxaway
(828) 966-4060

Alleghany Jubilee
Tuesday & Saturday nights
Sparta
(336) 372-4591
http://alleghanyjubilee.com

Remarkable Rhododendron Ramble
June 2–17, Linville
(828) 733-2013
www.grandfather.com

Farmers Market
Wednesdays & Saturdays, Hickory
(828) 308-6508
www.hickoryfarmersmarket.com

Wicked Plants
Exhibit on diabolical botanicals
Through Sept. 3, Asheville
(828) 665-2492
www.ncarboretum.org

Piedmont

Fish Fry Day
Food, live music
June 1, Albemarle
(704) 244-0186
www.albemarledowntown.com

Legends of Beach
Beach music classics
June 1, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.surryarts.org

Fiddlers Convention
June 1–2, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.mountairyfiddlersconvention.com

Co-op A Fair
Diamond View Park
June 2, Durham
www.communitytour.coop

Wine, Bid & Boogie
Art auction
June 2, Germanton
(336) 403-9493
www.stokesarts.org/artauctions.html

Karz For Kidz
Car & truck show fundraiser
June 2, Fayetteville
(910) 728-5372
www.newlifehopemills.com

Championship Plowing Contest
June 2, Linden
(910) 897-6700
www.ncworkhorseandmuleassociation.org

The Mixed Emotions
Beach music, dancing
June 2, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.surryarts.org

Heritage Day
June 2, Star
(910) 220-0752

All Around The Town Garden Tour
June 2–3, Lexington
(336) 731-1427

Concert & Art Market
June 3, Wake Forest
(919) 761-1130
www.wakeforestarts.org

Christian Harmony Singing
June 3, Union Grove
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www.ncartmuseum.org

Tibetan Cultural Pageant
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www.artscenterlive.org

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www.monkstour.info

Living Storybook
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Alive After Five
Carolina Breakers
June 14, Lumberton
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Craig Woolard Band
June 15, Mount Airy
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www.surryarts.org

Bluegrass Concert
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www.littlecreekmusicpark.com

Juneteenth
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www.cityofbelmont.org

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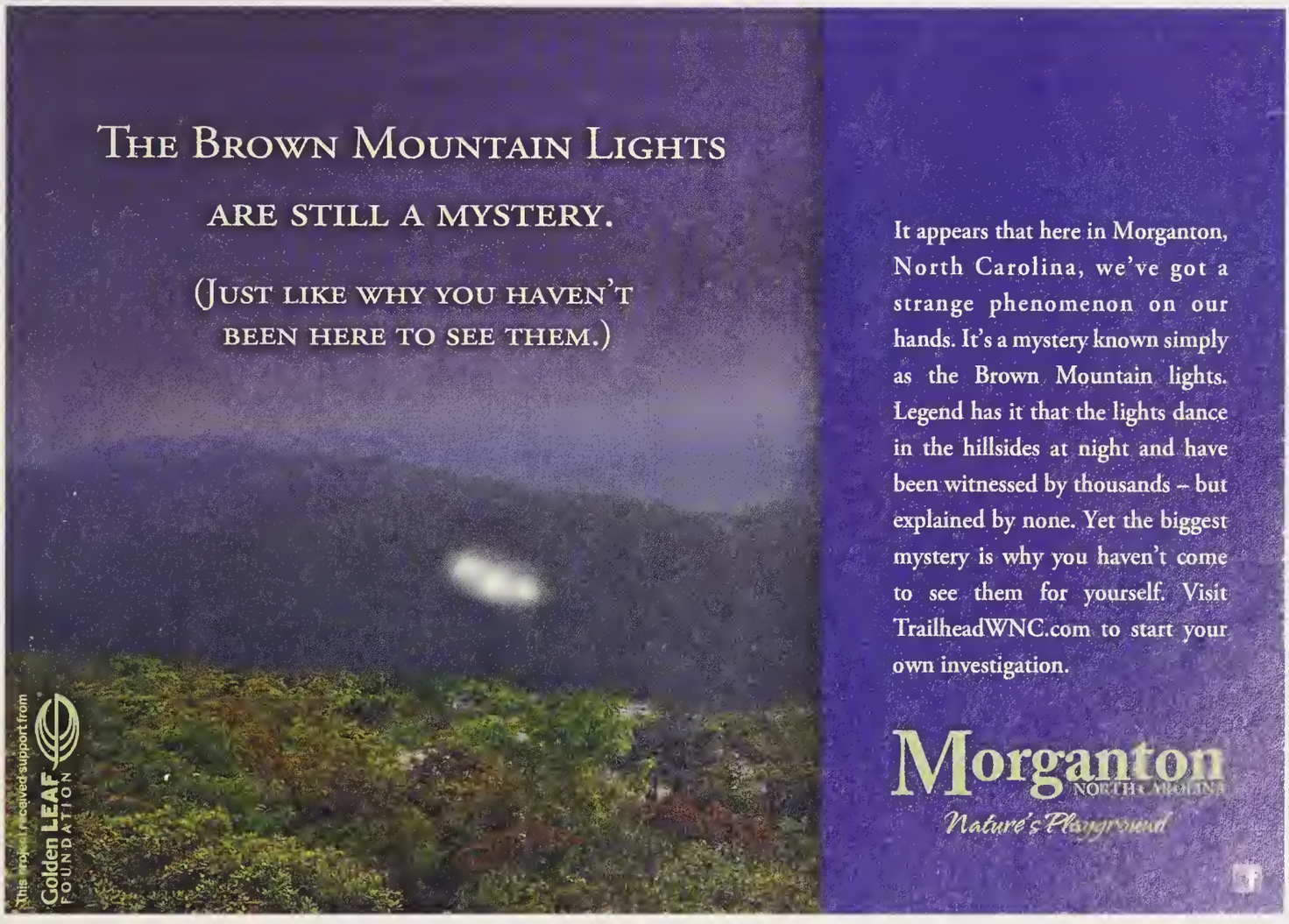
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www.theartscouncil.org

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www.graveyardoftheatlantic.com

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Linda Eder photo: Carolina Palmgren.
Appalachian

A tractor ride through the countryside

A new event at the Southeast Old Threshers' Reunion in Denton

Aspiring farmers Hagan Kiser, 16, and Landon Russell, 13, love riding their tractors. Kiser has a bright pink 1949 Farmall Super A while little Russell sits high on a big 1953 Farmall Super M. Both will be participating in a new tractor ride through the rolling Uwharrie Mountains.

The first annual Denton FarmPark Tractor Ride on Friday, June 29, beginning at 9:30 a.m., is a new component of the annual Southeast Old Threshers' Reunion, June 30–July 4. The $20 per person fee includes a T-shirt and a barbecue meal. Each driver is encouraged to bring along a small cooler with refreshments. Featuring only tractors manufactured in 1965 and earlier, the ride is open to drivers age12 years and older. Parents or guardians need to either ride with the child or be on a separate tractor in front or behind them. Retired New York Giants football player Madison Hedgecock, a local farmer originally from Davidson County will be grand marshal. The sponsor is OASIS, LLC—Organic Agra Soil Improvement Solutions of Denton.

Organizer Tim Loflin anticipates the 25-mile ride will take 2½ to 3 hours, with stops along the way in rural Davidson, Montgomery and Randolph counties. Tractors will pass by picturesque pastures, lush fields of corn, wheat and soy beans. The route goes up and down hills, crosses babbling waters and passes under large shade trees. Some roads are paved, some gravel. Some have hairpin curves. You'll see a windmill, an old store, ruins from an old country home and ponds.

"This is a fun, new component to the Southeast Old Threshers' Reunion," Loflin said. "We normally see around 1,000 tractors of all sizes. We hope some of the owners will want to experience the countryside and ride."

The Denton FarmPark is located at 1072 Cranford Road in Denton, just off NC Hwy. 49 between Asheboro and Charlotte. For more information: (336) 859-2755 or www.farmpark.com

—Greta Lint

Denton Farmpark Tractor Ride, June 29

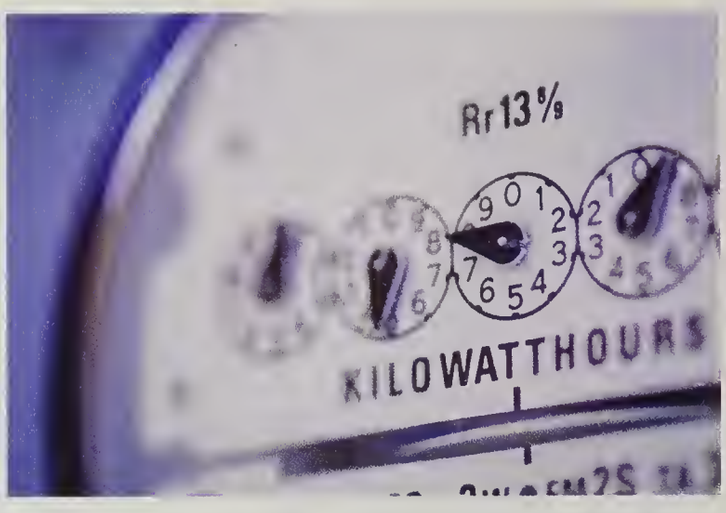
at the Southeast Old Threshers' Reunion (runs June 30–July 4)

- 25-mile ride
- $20 includes T-shirt and barbecue meal
- Call (336) 859-2755 or visit www.farmpark.com

By Hannah McKenzie

How to analyze your electricity usage

Q I see gadgets being sold at home improvement stores that measure energy use for things plugged in at home. Would purchasing one help me save energy?



The gadget you mention is a watt meter. It's a device that measures the amount of wattage a plug-in electrical appliance uses. Some can monitor usage over a period of time. Most of them allow you to input your electric rate to determine how much it costs to run your television or toaster for a period of time. Some popular products include the Kill A Watt, Belkin Conserve Insight and Watts Up?. A watt meter may help you save energy if you change your habits based on what you learn from it.

You can do the same analysis with a pen and paper instead of purchasing a gadget. Here's how:

Determine the wattage. Most small appliances have wattage indicated on them, like a hair dryer, computer or coffee maker. It can be difficult to find the wattage on large appliances because it may involve moving the dishwasher, clothes washer or refrigerator, which is not very practical. If you can easily reach the plug, a watt meter would come in handy. The other option is to visit www.energysavers.gov/your_home/appliances and click "Estimating Appliance and Home Electronic Energy Use" to see a detailed list of approximate wattage used by most home appliances.

Know your habits. How many hours each day is the television used? How long do you leave the coffee maker running each morning? How long do you use an electric space heater to warm up a room when it is cold outside?

Determine your electric rate. You're looking for the kilowatt-hour (kwh) rate. It should be between 10 and 16 cents for most households in North Carolina. You can find your kwh rate on your bill or by calling your electric cooperative. Another option is to do the math by dividing the dollar amount charged for a month of usage by the total kwh used in that month. Make sure that you are looking at the amount charged for the kwh (not fees, taxes, water or trash removal).

Do the math to determine the kwh usage and cost. I have broken it into two steps to keep it simple.

Step 1: (Device wattage x hours used per month) ÷ 1,000 = Monthly kilowatt-hour (kwh) consumption

(Monthly kwh consumption) x (kwh rate) = Monthly cost

Hair dryer example: *My hair dryer uses 1,600 watts. I use it for 5 minutes every morning. That means I use it for 150 minutes every month (5 minutes x 30 days), which converts to 2.5 hours each month (150 minutes ÷ 60 minutes). My electric rate is $0.12 per kwh. I'm ready to use the formula.*

Step 2: (1,600 watts x 2.5 hours) ÷ 1,000 = 4 kwh per month. Then, 4 kwh x $0.12 = $0.48.

Whew! It only costs $5.76 to use my hair dryer 5 minutes a day for an entire year ($0.48 x 12 months).

Television example: *On the other hand, leaving your television on all the time costs a little bit more. My television uses 135 watts. Let's see what it costs per day.*

(135 watts x 24 hours) ÷ 1000 = 3.24 kwh per day. Then, 3.24 kwh x $0.12 = $0.39 per day.

To leave it on all day, every day would cost me $142.35 each year!

Another good use of these plug-in watt meters is the ability to see how much energy an appliance uses when it is turned "off." Yes, many appliances use energy while waiting to be turned on such as DVD players, TVs, stereo systems, etc. and it can contribute to your overall power bill. We call that "phantom" or "vampire" loads—consuming energy while seemingly turned off. If you find "phantom watts" being wasted, a plug-in power strip with an on/off switch will stop the wasteful watts from flowing.

Your electric use can go down if you change your habits from what you learn. Suggestions to start include turning off electronics (power strip) while you are not using them, using Energy Star-labeled lighting products, replacing older inefficient appliances with Energy Star-labeled ones or simply hanging your clothes outside to dry. Involve everyone in your household, especially kids, and make changes to your habits at a speed that suits your family. The secret to success is making it a fun learning experience and a family team effort.

Hannah McKenzie is a residential building science consultant at Advanced Energy in Raleigh (www.advancedenergy.org) who specializes in working with nonprofit developers like Habitat for Humanity to make new affordable housing energy efficient.

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Cabbage Rolls

- 1 medium head cabbage
- ¾ pound lean ground beef
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 1 can (14 ½ ounces) diced tomatoes, undrained
- ½ cup water
- ⅓ cup instant brown rice
- 1 can (15 ounces) tomato sauce
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- ½ teaspoon dried basil
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ½ cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese

Cook cabbage in boiling water just until leaves fall off head. Set aside 8 large leaves for rolls. (Refrigerate remaining cabbage for another use.) Cut out the thick vein from the bottom of each reserved leaf, making a V-shaped cut. Set aside.

In a large nonstick skillet, cook the ground beef and onion over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Stir in tomatoes and water; bring to a boil. Stir in rice; return to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 5 minutes.

Place about ⅓ cup beef mixture on each reserved cabbage leaf; overlap cut ends of leaf. Fold in sides, beginning from the cut end. Roll up completely to enclose filling

In a bowl, combine the tomato sauce, Worcestershire sauce, basil, thyme and sugar. Spread half on the bottom of an 11-by-7-by-2-inch baking dish coated with nonstick cooking spray. Top with cabbage rolls and remaining tomato sauce mixture. Cover and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Uncover; sprinkle with cheese. Bake 5–10 minutes longer or until bubbly and cheese is melted.

Yield: 4 servings

Strawberry Cream Cheese Pie

- Pastry for a single-crust pie (9-inches)
- 1 package (8 ounces) reduced-fat cream cheese
- ½ cup egg substitute
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3½ cups sliced fresh strawberries
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- ½ cup cold water
- ½ cup reduced-sugar strawberry preserves
- Fat-free whipped topping, optional

Roll out pastry to fit a 9-inch pie plate; transfer pastry to plate. Trim pastry to ½-inch beyond the edge of plate, flute edges. Prick bottom and sides of crust with a fork. Bake at 350 degrees for 13–15 minutes or until lightly browned.

Meanwhile, in a mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese, egg substitute, honey and vanilla until smooth. Pour into the crust. Bake 15–18 minutes longer or until the center is almost set. Cool on a wire rack to room temperature.

Arrange strawberries over filling. In a saucepan, combine the cornstarch and water until smooth. Stir in preserves. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Spoon or brush over the strawberries. Refrigerate for 2 hours before cutting. Garnish with whipped topping if desired. Refrigerate leftovers.

Yield: 8 servings

Find more than 500 recipes at www.carolinacountry.com

Recipes are by Taste of Home magazine,unless otherwise indicated. For a sample copy, send $2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, PO Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at www.tasteofhome.com.

From Your Kitchen

Low Country Vegetable Pie

- 3–4 yellow squash, sliced
- 2 zucchini squash, sliced
- 1 large Vidalia onion, sliced
- 2 cans diced tomatoes, drained
- 2 cups mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup light mayonnaise

Put sliced vegetables in casserole dish and sprinkle lightly with salt. Mix cheeses with mayonnaise and dollop on top of vegetables. Spread to cover vegetables. Bake 40-50 minutes in 350-degree oven. Drain juices from casserole and serve.

This recipe comes from Brantley Averkamp of Cornelius, a member of EnergyUnited.

Send Us Your Recipes

Contributors whose recipes are published will receive $25. We retain reprint rights for all submissions. Recipes submitted are not necessarily entirely original. Include your name, address, phone number (for questions), and the name of your electric cooperative. Mail to: Carolina Country Kitchen, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611 or E-mail to: Jenny.Lloyd@carolinacountry.com.

Broiled Parmesan Tomatoes

- 3 large tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ¼ teaspoon coarsely ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh basil or 1 teaspoon dried basil
- ¾ cup soft bread crumbs
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

Slice tomatoes in half. Using a small spoon, remove seeds. Place tomato halves on a broiler pan coated with nonstick cooking spray. Combine the oil, garlic and pepper. Brush over tomatoes. Sprinkle with basil

Broil about 6 inches from the heat for 3–4 minutes or until heated through. In a small bowl, combine bread crumbs and Parmesan cheese. Sprinkle over tomatoes. Broil 1–2 minutes longer or until crumbs are lightly browned. Serve immediately.

Yield: 6 servings

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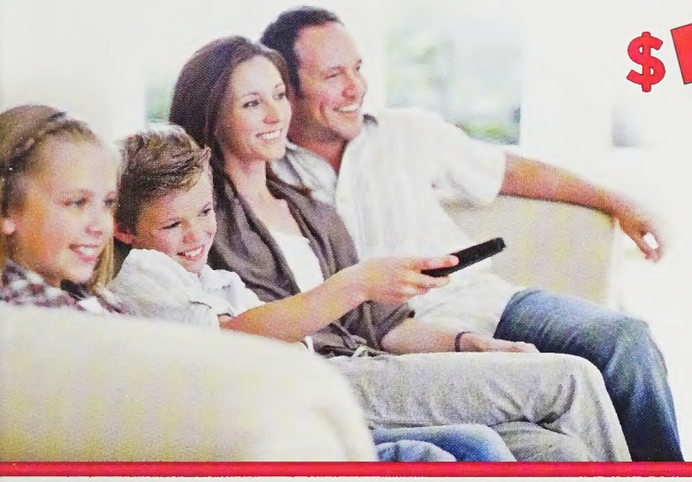

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55	$3.20	$4.30	$2.53	$3.55
65	$5.36	$7.18	$4.14	$5.41
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